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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAKU 000341

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: DON,T FORGET ABOUT OUR INTERESTS IN
CONTEXT OF TURKEY-ARMENIA

REF: A. BAKU 329

[1](#)B. BAKU 321

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Robert Garverick
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Presidential Administration National Security Advisor Novruz Mammedov relayed to DAS Matt Bryza April 24 in Baku the nervousness and skittishness that some in Azerbaijan are feeling on the heels of Turkey,s and Armenia,s decision to initial a roadmap on normalization, and Washington,s support of the process. Nonetheless, he indicated that Azerbaijan embraces our &3 18 approach, based on the Basic Principles, to achieve a breakthrough on Nagorno-Karabakh before the Turkey-Armenia border reopens. Mammedov wondered aloud whether Azerbaijan,s interests were being taken into account, and suggested that Armenia was being handed &a great gift.⁸ DAS Bryza assured Mammedov that the U.S. Government is looking at broader, strategic interests in the region and that Azerbaijan,s interests are understood, and being considered at the highest levels. Turkey will not open its border with Armenia immediately, and thus during the meantime there is an excellent opportunity for progress on Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States will press all sides to continue negotiating constructively and President Obama and Secretary Clinton will be involved. The Minsk Group will continue to press for a comprehensive deal to return all seven occupied territories to Azerbaijan. The United States is also pressing hard on Turkey to resolve differences with Azerbaijan on natural gas transit. Mammedov said that Bryza,s words were encouraging. The key he said is resolution, with recognition of Azerbaijan,s interests.
End Summary

[1](#)2. (C) DAS Matt Bryza, visiting Baku for Minsk Group co-Chairs meetings, called on Presidential Administration National Security Advisory Novruz Mammedov April 24 to follow up last week,s meeting (ref a) and brief the Azerbaijani leadership on regional developments, particularly in light of Turkey,s and Armenia,s agreement on a &roadmap⁸ to reconciliation, the impact on negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and events surrounding Armenian Remembrance Day. (Note: Bryza met individually with Mammedov; Minsk Group co-Chairs (Russia, France) did not join the meeting.)

13. (C) Mammedov noted that Azerbaijan had toned down rhetoric on the Turkey-Armenia reconciliation process since DAS Bryza's last visit, April 17. Now, however, statements on roadmaps are coming out of Ankara, Yerevan and Washington. Baku is studying developments to determine the impact on Azerbaijan's interests and national security, especially Nagorno-Karabakh and the occupied territories. There is still a debate in Baku, Mammedov said, within the Presidential Administration and at the Foreign Ministry, about how Azerbaijan should respond and move forward. He asked to hear the latest from the U.S. side to help place the events in the proper context and craft arguments for policy responses.

14. (C) DAS Bryza thanked Mammedov for cooperation and restraint over the last week, and noted that he had traveled to Turkey and Armenia to discuss these very issues. The U.S. position, he said, had not changed. That is, the United States, at the most senior levels, is encouraging Turkey and Armenia to reconcile their differences and take steps toward normalization. This approach, he said, will lead to stability in the greater region and create opportunities for peace and prosperity. The State Department's role in particular is to look at the broader, strategic picture and consider U.S. interests in the region. That includes Azerbaijan, which is strategically located in the Caspian region, cooperates on counter-terrorism and has enormous natural resources.

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15. (C) A Turkey-Armenia agreement should lead to an eventual opening of the border, but no one expects Turkey to open its border with Armenia immediately. Rather, there is a process in place for implementation, which could last several months. During this period, all sides will strongly encourage Armenia to negotiate constructively on Nagorno-Karabakh and the Basic (Madrid) Principles. The Minsk Group will be active on this front. In the United States, President Obama and Secretary Clinton will be involved, as they see the larger process as a high priority.

16. (C) Mammedov said that many in Azerbaijan fear a process they cannot control, with some suggesting that all sides are merely playing their individual interests with taking Azerbaijan into account. The Azerbaijani population, he said, is concluding that the United States wants to resolve Armenia's problems, but doesn't care about Baku's interests or the impact on Azerbaijan. Some suggest that Azerbaijan has taken a back seat, and therefore these commentators are losing confidence in the United States as a mediator. What you say is encouraging, Mammedov said. But people are nervous and unsure, and afraid of losing leverage over the Armenians.

17. (C) Mammedov called for concrete results in the interim, between the time of the initialing of the roadmap and the final decision to open borders. Armenia must withdrawal from the occupied territories. Azerbaijan fears, though, that Armenia's positions will not soften. Armenia now thinks that it has the support of the international community. They are very confident in Yerevan, he said. If I were Armenian, Mammedov speculated, I would stop negotiating with Azerbaijan. What incentive is there? He wondered. Armenia is receiving a big gift!

18. (C) DAS Bryza said that he understood Azerbaijan's concerns, and repeated his message that the U.S. Government is committed at the highest levels to reach a breakthrough on NK in coming months. We are not leaving out Baku, he said. All sides know that Turkey controls the pace of implementation of the Turkey-Armenia agreement, with a border opening able to occur only after parliamentary ratification of the agreement. The Turkish Parliament thus will have an opportunity to protect the interests of Azerbaijan during the

process. The United States, too, will press Yerevan to come to the table and be constructive. The Minsk Group meanwhile will continue finalizing the Basic Principles, which calls for the return of all seven occupied territories in a comprehensive plan. This will require more negotiations, which the co-Chairs are prepared to do.

¶9. (C) Mammedov repeated his message that DAS Bryza,s words were encouraging. &Whether the plan is step-by-step or comprehensive doesn,t matter,8 he said. The key is implementing the plan outlined by Bryza, which takes Azerbaijan,s interest into account.

¶10. (C) DAS Bryza noted that the United States is also pressing hard on Turkey to resolve differences with Azerbaijan on natural gas transit. Bryza said that he met earlier this week with Turkish President Gul and pushed this point. &Transit issues must be addressed and resolved,8 he said, &Turkey could lose Azerbaijan as a partner.8

¶11. (C) Comment: It is noteworthy that Mammedov did not press for the "five territory" plan that has circulated in Baku (and to some extent Ankara) lately and instead embraced the &3 18 approach outlined by Bryza. He also did not criticize the Minsk Group process or the Basic Principles. His message, more clearly, was that one way or the other, Azerbaijan,s interests must be taken into consideration. Mammedov, who pulled no punches last weekend when addressing the U.S. role in regional affairs in the context of President Aliyev,s meetings in Moscow with President Medvedev (ref b), seemed pleased with DAS Bryza,s April 24 message.

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